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MMR Vaccination: A Shield Against Measles, Mumps, and Rubella

I was in grade school when I contracted measles during the 1970s. I had been vaccinated as a baby in 1967. However, the vaccine I received was from the dead version of the virus and did not provide the long-term immunity that immunizations do today. However, I do believe that even though the vaccine did not prevent me from contracting measles, it did make my illness less severe.

As measles cases continue to rise in Kansas, it is important to understand the effect that measles can have on those who have not been vaccinated. As of April 9, KDH is reporting 32 measles cases in 8 western Kansas counties. Most of those contracting the illness have not been vaccinated, or their vaccination status is unknown. This underscores the importance of receiving an MMR (Measles, Mumps, and Rubella) vaccination. Studies have shown that the MMR prevents the disease safely and effectively.

According to the CDC, **MEASLES (M)** causes fever, cough, runny nose, and red, watery eyes, commonly followed by a rash that covers the whole body. It can lead to seizures (often associated with fever), ear infections, diarrhea, and pneumonia. Rarely, measles can cause brain damage or death.

Currently, the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) recommends a two-dose MMR vaccination. The first dose should be given at 12-15 months and then a second dose at 4-6 years. The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommends that people who don't have presumptive evidence of immunity to measles, mumps, and rubella get vaccinated against the disease. Presumptive evidence of immunity can be established by:

- Written documentation of adequate vaccines for measles, mumps, and rubella
- Laboratory evidence of immunity
- Laboratory confirmation of disease
- Birth before 1957

Most people vaccinated with the MMR vaccine will have protection for life. Contact your healthcare provider for more information about Measles and vaccinations.